

Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) Joint Meeting with Pedestrian Advisory Committee*

Meeting Minutes for December 13, 2017, Town Hall 5th Floor, School Committee Meeting Room, 7:00 PM

Submitted by Cynthia Snow

BAC Members Present: John Bowman, Mark Lowenstein, Jacob Meunier, Cynthia Snow, Tommy Vitolo

BAC Members Absent: Bryan Decker, Kristin Schreiber Jonathan Kapust (Transportation Board liaison), Brian Sutherland (police liaison)

Public: John Harris, David Kroop, Jules Milner-Brage, Seth Rubin

Emerald Network

Nidhi Gulati, Emerald Network Program Manager for LivableStreets Alliance, presented the philosophy, expected value, and feasibility of creating a network of multi-use, non-motorized, safe, low-stress greenways throughout the Boston metropolitan region. The goals are to improve mobility, enhance quality of life, support economic development, contribute to a healthy environment and improve equity in transportation.

Boston starts with the Olmsted-developed Emerald Necklace but seeks to better connect parts of that network that have been separated over the years and to build a 200-mile network of greenways to provide safer connections for non-motorized transportation. Ideally, these greenways will be separated from motorized traffic or on streets with low volume, slow traffic. They will also have significant trees or other greenery.

Among projects already underway: the Watertown-Cambridge bike path under construction next year, and re-design of Morrissey Blvd is currently underway. Other projects are in various stages of development with community partners in Roxbury, Watertown, Brookline, Roslindale and others.

During the question and comment period the following points were made:

- Brookline's Complete Streets policy should be the basis for comprehensive transportation planning.
- Brookline's Open Space plan has a Greenways Subcommittee, which has been abstract but positive; its vision should be operationalized, e.g., on the Beacon Street corridor
- Wayfinding signage is very important to help users find and follow greenways and other preferred bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the region.
- Brookline should endorse the Emerald Network Plan and work to implement the Town's parts
- Beacon Street could be part of the Network (LivableStreets would be open to a request).

Commonalities of Interest between the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees

Frank Caro, Chair of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee, noted that both pedestrians and cyclists are vulnerable to motor vehicles. Although there are some conflicts (particularly on sidewalks and shared use paths), the two committees should be mutually supportive and work together.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The greatest safety for all road users is when all modes (foot, bicycle, vehicle) are separated from each other.
- We should think in terms not of "pedestrians," "cyclists," and "drivers" but of people who walk, cycle and drive.
- Making improvements to the walking environment improves the quality of life in a community.
- To improve non-motorized accommodations, it is necessary to deal with parking issues; variable demand pricing is meeting with success in several communities.
- Wholistic transportation planning is sorely needed but difficult in Brookline because of the Town Meeting and high volunteer system of government.
- Providing safe, connected routes and networks for non-motorized traffic is a key component in climate change amelioration
- It would be good for PAC and BAC to hold joint meetings 2-3 times per year

*See also separate minutes prepared by Pedestrian Advisory Committee